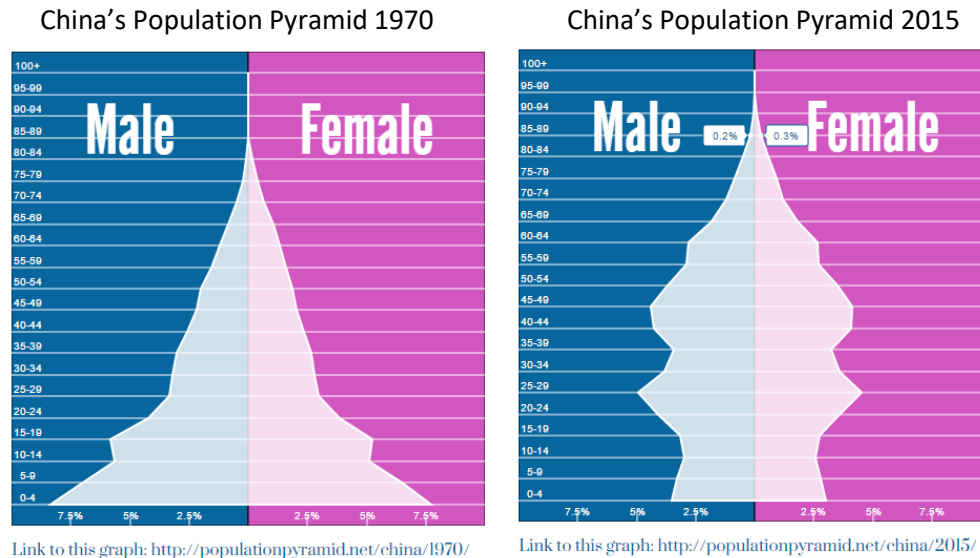


Article 1: Britannica.com on China's One Child Policy



Excerpt taken from: <http://www.britannica.com/topic/one-child-policy>

One-child policy, official program initiated in the late 1970s and early 1980s by the central government of China, the purpose of which was to limit the great majority of family units in the country to one child each. The rationale for implementing the policy was to reduce the growth rate of China's enormous population.

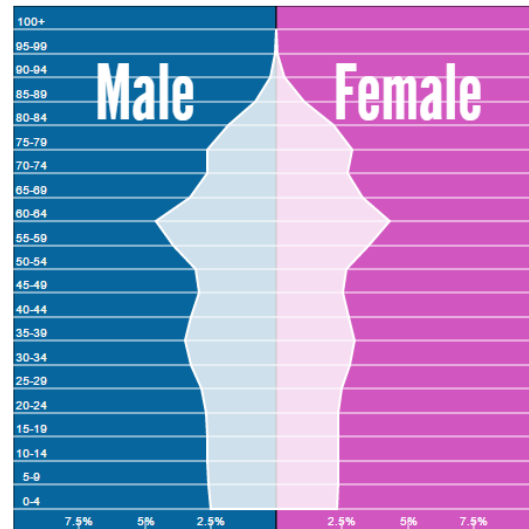
China has promoted the use of birth control and family planning since the establishment of the People's Republic in 1949, though such efforts remained sporadic and voluntary until after the death of Mao Zedong in 1976. By the late 1970s China's population was rapidly approaching the one-billion mark, and the country's new pragmatic leadership headed by Deng Xiaoping was beginning to give serious consideration to curbing what had become a rapid population growth rate. A voluntary program was announced in late 1978 that encouraged families to have no more than two children, with one child being preferable. In 1979 demand grew for making the limit one child per family. However, this stricter requirement was then applied unevenly across the country among the provinces, and by 1980 the central government sought to standardize the one-child policy nationwide. On Sept. 25, 1980, a public letter—published by the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party to the party membership—called upon all to adhere to the one-child policy, and this date has often been cited as the policy's "official" start date.

The program was intended to be applied universally, although exceptions were made—e.g., parents within some ethnic minority groups or those whose firstborn was handicapped were allowed to have more than one child. It was implemented more effectively in urban environments, where much of the population consists of small nuclear families who were more willing to comply with the policy, than in rural areas, with their traditional agrarian extended families that resisted the one-child restriction. In addition, enforcement of the policy has been somewhat uneven over time, generally being strongest in cities and more lenient in the countryside. Methods of enforcement have included making various contraceptive methods widely available, offering financial incentives and preferential employment opportunities for those who comply, imposing sanctions (economic or otherwise) against those who violate the policy, and, at times (notably the early 1980s), invoking stronger measures such as forced abortions and sterilizations (the latter primarily of women).

The result of the policy has been a general decline in China's fertility and birth rates since 1980, with the fertility rate declining and dropping below two children per woman in the mid-1990s. These gains have been offset to some degree by a similar drop in the death rate and a rise in life expectancy, but China's overall rate of natural increase has declined.

Article 2: Glaring Mistake? By David McKenzie, CNN, 3/30/15

China's Projected Population Pyramid 2050



Link to this graph: <http://populationpyramid.net/china/2050/>

The Party is in a race against the clock. China faces a rapidly aging population and shrinking workforce.

The government says the country could become home to the most elderly population on the planet in just 15 years, with more than 400 million over the age of 60. Researchers say healthcare and social services will all be burdened by the greying population, and the world's second largest economy will struggle to maintain its growth.

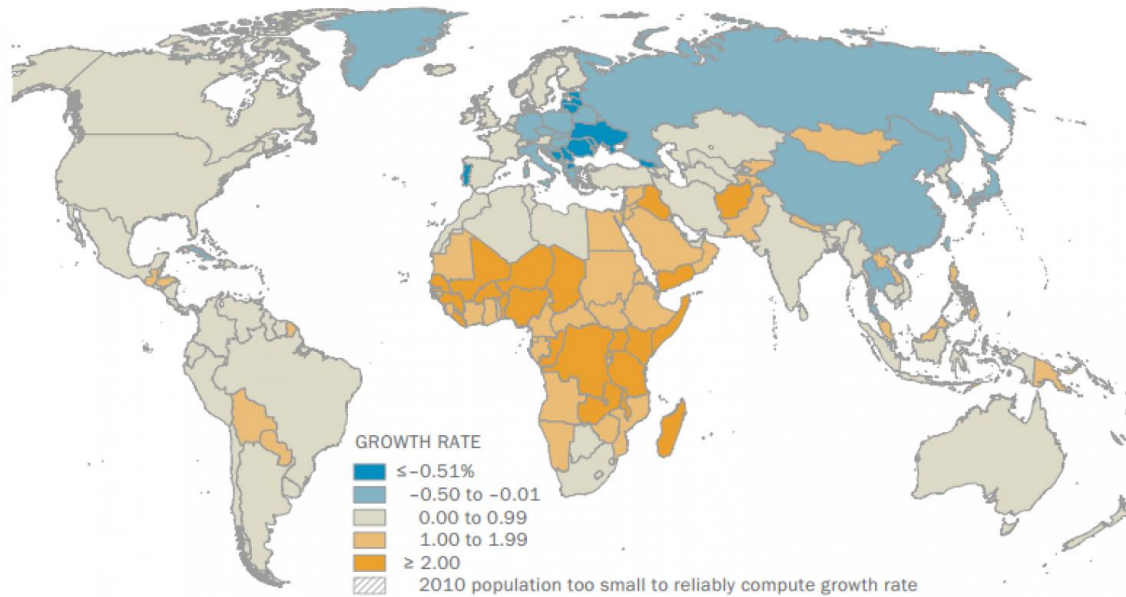
"China has already begun to feel an unfolding crisis in terms of its population change," says Wang Feng, a professor at Fudan University and a leading demographic expert on China.

"History will look back to see the one-child policy as one of the most glaring policy mistakes that China has made in its modern history."

Perhaps surprisingly, Wang says that the one-child policy was both ineffective and unnecessary, since China's fertility rates were already slowing by the 1980s. The Chinese government still maintains that it was necessary to keep numbers down.

But with around 150 million one-child families and a shrinking population, the Chinese government is moving cautiously, rather than doing away with the policy altogether. In January 2014, China said it would allow couples to have a second baby if the mother or father was an only child themselves. But, to the surprise of many, the new rules haven't yet sparked a baby boom.

Projected Annual Growth Rate of Country Populations, 2010-2050



Source: The Future of World Religions: Population Growth Projections, 2010-2050

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Much has been written about Europe's debt and financial crises. This, however, is not the only challenge the continent faces: Some European countries are rapidly aging, as this map shows. All over the continent, potential parents have shown reluctance to have more babies. Hence, governments and advocacy groups are becoming increasingly creative about getting their citizens to make babies. Here are five rather unusual ideas that are supposed to achieve this goal:

1. In Denmark, schoolchildren are taught in class that they should have more babies

The Scandinavian country comes out on top of many international rankings, but in terms of fertility rates it lags far behind. According to the association Sex and Society, which produces the country's sex education guides, unwillingness to raise children is only part of the problem. "We see a lot of people who don't succeed in having children," the association's secretary general, Bjarne Christensen, told Bloomberg last year in an interview in which she called the problem "epidemic."

Whereas sex education has so far focused on using contraceptives and preventing diseases, teachers forgot to mention some crucial biological aspects. "Suddenly we just thought, maybe we should actually also tell them about how to get pregnant," national director of Sex and Society, Marianne Lomholt, told the New York Times. Between 12 and 20 percent of all Danes are unable to have children — predominantly because they are already too old at the time they make the decision. The reaction of Denmark's education ministry has followed the advice of Sex and Society: Teachers do not only talk about the dangers of sex and pregnancies anymore, but also about its benefits.

2. TV ads promote sex as acts of patriotism

"Do it for Denmark" is the name of the ad campaign of Danish travel company Spies. In a video ad (available on Youtube, ask your parents' permission first, it is a little suggestive) that was released last year, the company emphasized that 10 percent of all Danes were conceived abroad.

"Can sex save Denmark's future? 46 percent of Danes have more sex on holiday," a voice-over explained. Hence, taking a vacation won't just relax you — it can also be seen as an act of patriotism. To promote the idea, the company offered so-called "ovulation discounts" to Danish couples. In case Danes were successful in conceiving a child while being on a vacation organized by the company, they were eligible to win three years of free diapers and a trip abroad — with their child, of course.

3. In Sweden, either moms or dads are paid nearly their full salary for more than one year — for staying at home

If you have a child in Sweden, you won't be back working for quite some time. For a total of 480 days, either the father or the mother of newborn children are legally entitled to receive 80 percent of their previous salaries.

Swedes also shouldn't worry too much about the time after their generous parental leave is over: Subsidized gym memberships and free massages are common at lots of the country's workspaces, and should help them get back on track quickly.

4. French children can do nearly everything for free or for a discounted price

Although American tourists frequently complain about prices in France, raising a child in France is the opposite experience. Children can use public transport for free or are heavily discounted. The same applies to museums, cinemas, theaters and virtually any other cultural institution.

Like other European countries, such as Germany, France also pays families with children and teenagers who are younger than 20 a monthly allowance. Throughout their teenage years, the French receive governmental benefits for student housing and other expenses if their family income does not exceed a certain threshold.

5. This dating site is only for Danes who want to have children

Finally, let's return to Denmark, which seems to be particularly creative in its recent child-friendly efforts. In 2013, French actor Emmanuel Limal launched a Danish dating platform uniquely dedicated to singles interested in having children soon.

"I couldn't seem to meet anyone willing to prioritize starting a family and struggled with when to mention wanting kids any time I met someone new. It's the ultimate dating taboo," Limal told the British Guardian newspaper in 2013.

As Denmark and some other European countries are stepping up their efforts to change that, Limal's dating platform might soon see the number of potential customers increase.

Article 4: Why Italy's New 'Fertility Day' Campaign Is a Sexist Mess by Claire Zillman, Fortune Magazine, 9/2/16

Italy wants its women to become baby-making machines. If you're in Italy, mark your calendar for Sept. 22, when the country will celebrate its state-sponsored "Fertility Day" to promote family planning and parenthood. Think that name is bad? It gets worse.

The government's campaign aimed at upping Italy's birth rate, which health minister Beatrice Lorenzin introduced this week, features a series of 12 promotional images that were supposed to be encouraging but came off as oddly threatening and, alas, went viral for all the wrong reasons. One with an image of a woman holding an hourglass says: "Beauty has no age. But fertility does," according to Quartz. Another reads, "Male fertility is much more vulnerable than you might think," and shows a browning banana peel.



Italy's low birth rate—along with its aging population and generous social services—is a threat to its financial future. According to World Bank data, there were 1.4 childbirths per Italian woman in 2014, well below the world average of 2.45. For comparison, the U.K.'s rate was 1.8 and the United States' was 1.9.

Reuters reports that Italy's birthrate landed at 1.35 last year, giving the country its lowest birth total in 154 years. The trouble with the Fertility Day campaign isn't that the low birthrate won't cause real problems, it's that those problems shouldn't be women's to solve. That's especially true since Italian workplace culture is still stacked against women, as evidenced by a practice known as "dimissioni in bianco," which a 2014 report by the European Parliament defined as "employers making [the] hiring of young women conditional to signing an undated letter of resignation to be used to justify dismissal in case of pregnancy."

Another stark example pregnancy prejudice came in the recent race for Rome mayor. When Giorgia Meloni announced her bid for the office while pregnant, she garnered unsolicited advice from former Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi, who told a radio station, "A mother cannot be mayor. Being mayor means being in your office 14 hours a day. I don't think this could be the right choice for Meloni." (Berlusconi was ousted from office in 2011 after a string of sex and financial scandals.)

Critics of the Fertility Day campaign have also cited the nation's high joblessness as a reason for the low birthrate and as the real issue—rather than women's reproductive decisions—that the government should address. In July, unemployment in the country was 11.4%—fourth-highest in the 28-member European Union.

The opposition 5-Star Movement said in a statement that women "responsibly consider the future" before having kids. "There's no work [in Italy]. People aren't having kids because it's not possible."

Even Prime Minister Matteo Renzi criticized the campaign, telling a radio station Thursday, "I don't know of any of my friends who had kids after they saw an advertisement." "If you want to create a society that invests in its future and has children, you have to make sure the underlying conditions are there," he said, citing the need for good jobs and childcare services.

The tone deafness of the campaign also reflects Italy's on-going struggle to get more women in positions of power. Women made some gains in June when 5 Star's Virginia Raggi became the first female mayor of Rome, and Chiara Appendino, also of the Five Star Movement, clinched Turin's mayorship. But still, just 28% of Italy's Senators and 31% of its House members are women. There are five women in Renzi's 16-member cabinet—down from eight in 2014. Italian media reports on Thursday indicated that Lorenzin was open to restructuring the campaign amid the on-going backlash. The Ministry of Health told Fortune that Lorenzin stood by the "principal themes" of the campaign but is going to "improve the communicative approach."

The campaign should be scrapped altogether since it implies that women are nothing more than baby-making machines—and it doesn't help that it's reminding people of the childrearing approach of dictator Benito Mussolini.